

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

30 APRIL 2013

Present: County Councillor Cowan (Chairperson);
County Councillors Ali, Chaundy, Goddard, Hyde, Keith Jones,
Margaret Jones, McKerlich and Benjamin Thomas

Apologies: County Councillors Chaundy, Furlong and Holland

29 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2013 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairperson.

30 : MEMBERS ENQUIRY SYSTEM - UPDATE

The Committee received a report on the performance of the Members Enquiry System since its implementation in December 2012. This System enables Members to record service requests; to check on any progress; and be informed of the outcomes of those enquiries. Members were reminded that this provides an interim solution using the QSM database. A longer term solution was currently being developed using the SAP database.

All Councillors were previously invited to attend voluntary training sessions on the use of the system, where Members would learn how to use the system and see the benefits of being able to manage enquiries online. The Member Services Team continues to offer this training on a one to one basis as required.

Since its implementation Members have provided feedback on their experiences using the new system. This has enabled improvements to be undertaken, such as the creation of a search facility which assists Members when tracking enquiries. It was envisaged that feedback from Members would be used whilst work continues on the permanent solution.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr John Agnew, Corporate Customer Services Manager to the meeting. He was invited to deliver a presentation on the Members' Enquiry System since its implementation. Members received a Performance Report. The Committee was advised that enquiries are monitored on a weekly and monthly basis. Potholes and resurfacing issues accounted for the highest number of enquiries.

The report highlighted the number of 'late fixes', enquiries which had fallen outside the service level timescale of 10 working days. The Committee was advised that officers in the Members Enquiry Line Team were liaising with Service Area Co-ordinators to seek responses to each individual enquiry. The number of late fixes, which (had peaked at 94) had been reduced to approximately 30 due to the proactive efforts of the Members Enquiry Line Team.

The Chairperson invited Members of the Committee to comment on the information presented and ask questions. The key points of the discussion are summarised as follows:

- Members felt the system was working well. However, some enquiries, particularly those relating to Highways, in particular potholes, were being closed without the Member being advised. John Agnew stated that there had been discussions relating to these enquiries and he had met officers from Highways in order to clarify the position.
- Members questioned whether service area responses to enquiries could be automatically copied to ward colleagues in the future.
- Members asked whether it would be possible to reopen closed enquiries or add further information. John Agnew stated that this facility existed as present and he gave a commitment to provide Members with instructions.
- The vast majority of Councillors had used the Members Enquiry System. Only two Councillors had not recorded any enquiries. Approximately 10 Councillors were regular users.
- Members requested that a web-based link be developed to allow Members to log enquiries whilst accessing system via the internet. John Agnew advised that, whilst security is an issue, work was being undertaken to develop such a facility, albeit with reduced functionality, i.e Members will be able to open enquiries but not track existing enquiries via a web-link.
- Members requested that any future reports clearly identify the number of days 'late fixes' which go beyond the 10 day service level target, and by how long i.e. 1 day beyond or 79 days beyond.

AGREED – That:

- (1) Members note the contents of the report;
- (2) the Committee receive quarterly updates on the Performance of the Members Enquiry System;
- (3) a customer satisfaction survey for all Councillors be undertaken on the Performance of the Members Enquiry System.

31 : MEMBERS ICT SYSTEM UPDATE

The Democratic Services Task and Finish Group had agreed to produce a questionnaire regarding the possible options for future ICT provision to Members. Officers circulated the draft confidential questionnaire to the Committee. The Committee was asked to comment on the contents of the questionnaire.

Following a brief discussion the Committee approved the contents of the draft questionnaire. It was agreed to allow all Members two weeks to respond to the questionnaire. The data received would be treated confidentially and used to inform a further report to Council on this issue.

AGREED – That the draft questionnaire be circulated to all Members with a request that responses be received by 15 May 2013.